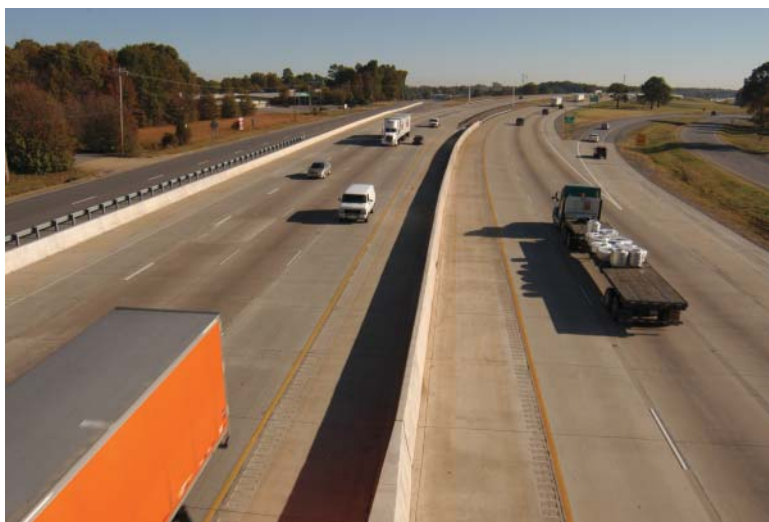


Our highways, "Promises made, Promises kept."

In late November I was joined by members of the Arkansas Department of Highways and Transportation, the mayor of Benton and others at a dedication of the completion of the Interstate 30 rehabilitation effort. It was slightly breezy and rather noisy. The reason it was noisy was because there was a lot of traffic moving pretty quickly. That's been very unusual for that area. In the past, the traffic was bottle-necked because we didn't have enough lanes.

In 1999 the voters of this state had the good sense to give the highway commission the opportunity to do something that has been innovative. They took the federal financing stream of highways, called Garvey Bonds and rebuilt massive sections of our interstates at a time. By building several miles at a time, we get an economy of scale that we don't get if we build them one mile at a time. Think about



The Interstate-30 rehabilitation project spanned 17 miles and cost \$200 million. Traffic in the area rose from 40,000 per day in 1985 to over 70,000 vehicles today. The project also included converting the frontage roads to one-way.

how much it would cost you to build a house one wall at a time. Next year you could afford another wall. The next year you build another wall until you'd eventually have four walls in four years. Four more years, you'd add a bedroom, then four more years you'd get a kitchen, then four more years you'd get a bathroom. In about 30 years you'd have a house. That's one way to do it. The other way is to do what every one of us has done. We go to the bank or the savings and loan and take out a mortgage, buying the entire house at one time and paying it out over time.

Gov. Mike Huckabee shakes hands with highway construction workers.



We've asked the voters, not to take a 30 year mortgage, but to give us a 10 to 12 year mortgage. By the time you factor inflation, deterioration and the cost of the economy of scale a bond program has already proven in the past six years to be a more effective way for us to build larger stretches of highway and rehabilitate them than under the old system.

I'm making it very clear to everyone. If you love driving on Arkansas interstates prior to 1999, it's real easy for us to go back. We can put up orange barrels on all of the 655 miles of interstate highway in Arkansas. And we

can keep those orange barrels forever. Or we can do what we've already done, going from some of the worst roads in America to some of the best.

I'd like to tell you about a few letters we've gotten concerning our highways. These first letters are from 1999, prior to the rehabilitation efforts. From Joshua, Texas, a family writes, "Our 2000 model van was being banged up like a trip hammer beats steel, the auto repair business must be very good in Arkansas. The roads are not safe to travel on and we will never return to your state. It is indeed a shame as Arkansas has a lot to offer. I will urge my family and friends to avoid Arkansas if at all possible as a trip there could well cost one his or her life." Another letter, from Georgia, says, "Your

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Arkansas strives to be a good neighbor through tragedy

When Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana last month, that state's governor called me wanting to borrow some of Arkansas' emergency assets. We provided the temporary use of state employees, vehicles and other emergency assets.

We all remember the devastating ice storms of December 2000. Many parts of Arkansas were covered with five solid inches of ice. Most of the electrical lines were damaged by the ice storms. Every Arkansas National Guard generator was put into emergency use and it didn't fill the need. At that time, I asked the governor of Louisiana for National Guard generators and other equipment. Louisiana provided what we needed during the ice storm crisis. This sharing of people and equipment is done under Emergency Management Assistance Compact – better known as EMAC.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew hit Florida. The destruction was so great that, even with the resources of the federal government, recovery would be slow. This was the catalyst for the Southern Governors Association, which includes Arkansas, to develop a state-to-state mu-

tual aid agreement. It was originally known as the Southern Regional Emergency Management Assistance Compact when it was adopted in 1993. Two years later, the Southern Governors Association decided to open

was born.

After Katrina and Rita hit our southern shores, a lot of attention was focused on the members of the National Guard, Arkansas State Police and Game and Fish enforcement officers that went to assist in the recovery. Little attention was paid to the fact that Arkansas sent doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and EMTs to the affected areas. In most disasters, public health is often the first casualty when electric power, water, sewer and telephone service is lost.

Medical personnel from Arkansas who went to storm-damaged areas handled many problems that are not normally seen in this country. They had to deal with people who had come in contact with downed power lines, eaten refrigerated foods long after the power went out, been bitten by snakes and caught infectious diseases from mosquitoes.

Often, EMAC is referred to as a state-to-state mutual aid agreement. I see it in much simpler terms. EMAC is that American spirit that says one neighbor helps another in times of trouble.



Vice Admiral Thad W. Allen, placed in charge of the federal response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, visited Arkansas and Tennessee to thank state offices for their work in handling the thousands of evacuees.

membership to any state or territory. It didn't take long for other governors to realize that every state faces a threat from disaster and the importance of EMAC. The agreement was ratified by Congress in 1996 and EMAC

2005 Public Official of the year

About a year ago, my daughter Sarah sent me a quote from Teddy Roosevelt to inspire me in my State of the State address. Roosevelt said, "Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work that is worth doing." Running the state of Arkansas is certainly hard work, but I know it is worth doing.

As hard as I work to serve the people of Arkansas, it sure is nice to be recognized by a national organization for the progress we have made here in the state. I was honored to learn that I was chosen by Governing magazine as one of its Public Officials of the Year for 2005. I'm proud to receive this honor from Governing magazine on behalf of all the great people in state government who help me make things happen.

The Governing editors referred to breakthroughs we have made in health coverage

for children, education management and school finance. They specifically mentioned the ARKids First program, which provides health coverage to 200,000 children in the state. This program has reduced the number of uninsured children in the state by half, from 20 percent down to 10 percent.

The article describes me as a 'compassionate conservative.' In the reception area of my office there is a picture with the caption "Our Boss." Inside the frame is not a picture of me. Right now, there's a picture of an infant who came to Arkansas after Hurricane Katrina. The child is sound asleep at a shelter in Little Rock, seeking shelter from the storm. That baby is an example of the many, many reasons I love my job. I work for the young, old, rich and poor people of this state. Even for those who come here by an unfortunate act of nature.



Gov. Huckabee accepts the Governing magazine award for Public Official of the Year at a banquet in Washington D.C.



Gov. Mike Huckabee praises highway rehabilitation efforts with I-30 in the background.

Highways

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state's Interstate-40 is shameful. I drove through five states this weekend and only your state had such dreadful road conditions."

Now, those were the letters we received before we fixed our highways. Let me read you some since. From Dublin, Virginia. "I'm an old-timey professional trucker. I thought I would never have anything good to say about Arkansas interstates. But the project you embarked upon and the way you've rebuilt your interstates has given you roads that will serve you well for many years." From Redding, California, "We drove from Little Rock to Fort Smith to Springdale and we're aware of the excellent condition of the highway surfaces, the complete lack of litter along the highways and of graffiti. Congratulations to the state and citizens for caring about the impressions that visitors will take away." And this letter from Minnesota, just one line, "The best stretch of highway we traveled in 2000 miles was in Arkansas."

Throughout our state people are moving not only faster, which is not our primary goal, but traffic is moving safer than it's ever moved. It's not just about the money, it's about the people. Those are your kids, your parents and your grandparents out on Arkansas interstates. We want to keep them in good shape. Due to the hard work of the highway department officials, and the folks out on these roads, we've been able to do something that is rarely done in politics, "Promises made, promises kept."

Let us
hear
from
you

Gov. Mike Huckabee
State Capitol
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
(501) 682-2345
mike.huckabee@state.ar.us

Duck hunting in Arkansas

While duck hunting is great fun, resident and nonresident hunters spend large amounts of money on this sport. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will sell an estimated 169,000 licenses, permits and stamps to duck hunters this year. That will generate about \$4 million in revenue. A valid Arkansas Waterfowl Stamp costs residents \$7 and nonresidents \$20. A federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp costs \$15 and hunting licenses cost anywhere from \$10.50 to \$225 each -- depending on what you want to hunt.

This does not count what hunters spend on duck leases, sporting equipment and staying at hunting lodges or hotels during a duck hunt. As you can see, there is an important business element in duck hunting.

Waterfowl hunters will get 60 days of hunting during the 2005-06 duck season. In Arkansas, there is a six duck daily bag limit this season. Duck season will be divided into three segments. The first is from

Nov. 19 to Dec. 4. After a 12-day break, waterfowl season runs from Dec. 16 until Christmas Eve. The season is closed on Christmas Day and opens again Dec. 26. The season comes to a close Jan. 29, 2006.

Occasionally, a hunter will shoot a banded duck. If you shoot a banded migratory bird, please call 1-800-327-BAND or report it online at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl. Information on those bands is important because it is used to determine everything from migration patterns to species population and health. The band is yours to keep and you will receive a certificate of appreciation for making the report.

When you go duck hunting, remember to respect other hunters. Your enjoyment and theirs will result from mutual courtesy. Keep the waterfowl hunting tradition and don't set up too close to or down wind of other hunters. That is neither safe nor ethical. Remember, we share responsibility for migratory bird and wetland resources throughout North America.



Quick tips for deer hunting safety

I love being in the woods and watching dawn break. The world comes to life as the new day begins. As much as I love deer hunting, I am always mindful that safety is my first priority in the woods. Every year people are shot because they are mistaken for a deer. These accidents can be avoided by putting safety rules above the thrill of the hunt.

♦ **The best precaution is to wear hunter orange.** *Hunters are required to wear at least 400 square inches of orange or chartreuse during deer, elk and bear seasons. These fluorescent colors tell other hunters you are not the game they seek.*

♦ **Always treat your rifle -- or bow -- as if it is ready to shoot.** *Never point a weapon at anyone when you think it is unloaded. Always point your weapon in a safe direction.*

♦ **Keep your safety on until ready to shoot.** *On most rifles, the safety is located usually within an inch of the trigger.*

♦ **Keep your excitement in check.** *I know what it is to have your pulse quicken with the sound of an approaching deer, but using good judgment is a must. Be sure you know what you are shooting at and know what is behind your target.*

♦ **Use hearing protection.** *The best thing to do is put a soft earplug in the ear closest to your rifle.*

Following a few safety tips can mean the difference between tragedy and a fun hunting trip. Good luck with the big bucks.

Capitol Offense plays Arkansas State Fair

My band Capitol Offense played at this year's State Fair. What made that night particularly 'sweet' was that we were the opening act for one of my favorite bands, Grand Funk Railroad. This band that I've followed over the years is now a group of mature, seasoned musicians who can still play with the best of them.

With only a guitar, a bass, and drums, they created "big sound" and many of the songs they did were able to really showcase the

strong talents of each musician. Unlike the over-produced "studio-built" bands of today, GFR were a popular concert band because their concerts sounded like their recordings. They were a band that really appealed to guitar players like myself and members of my band.

As the only band with a sitting governor as leader, Capitol Offense is made up of some members of my staff or close friends. We started out with casual jam sessions in the

basement of the governor's mansion. We soon began playing at all types of charity events and took center stage at the Hope Watermelon Festival and the Helena Blues Festival. The venues have grown from there. We've had the thrill of opening up for groups like the Charlie Daniels Band and Willie Nelson and even played for President Bush at the Free Republic Inaugural Ball.

While we may never win a Grammy award, we'll take pride in our reputation as a 'rock-the-house' band, looking forward to our next chance to jam for the people of Arkansas.

Members from left to right: Governor Mike Huckabee, Terri Cox, Aaron Black, Rick Calhoun and Gordan Caffey. Not pictured: Marynell Branch and Chris Pyle.



Governor Mike Huckabee

Capitol Views

State Capitol
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-2345

E-MAIL ADDRESS
mike.huckabee@state.ar.us
www.Arkansas.gov/governor

